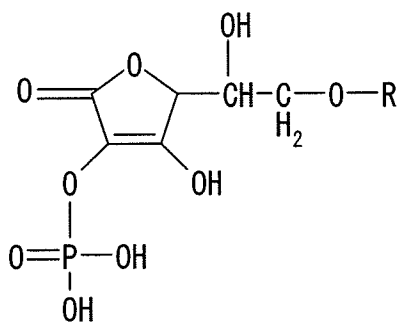


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented): An agent for skin external use, comprising:
a salt of higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester, said higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester being represented by the following formula (1):



Formula (1)

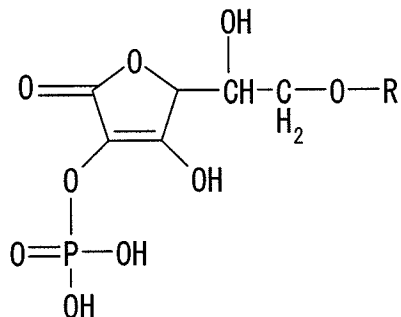
wherein R is a residual group of an aliphatic carboxylic acid having 10 to 20 carbon atoms, and 1,2-pentanediol or 1,2-hexanediol.

2. (canceled).
3. (previously presented): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 1, wherein R in the formula (1) is a residual group of lauric acid, myristic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, 2-hexyldecanoic acid or isostearic acid.

4. (previously presented): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 1, wherein R in the formula (1) is a residual group of palmitic acid.
5. (previously presented): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 1, wherein R in the formula (1) is a residual group of 2-hexyldecanoic acid.
6. (previously presented): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 1, wherein the salt of higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester is a Na salt, a K salt, a Mg salt or a Zn salt.
7. (previously presented): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 1, wherein the salt of higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester is contained in an amount of 0.01 to 20% by mass.
8. (canceled).
9. (canceled).
10. (previously presented): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 1, wherein 1,2-pentanediol or 1,2-hexanediol is contained in an amount of not less than 0.05% by mass and less than 12% by mass.

11. (canceled).
12. (canceled).
13. (previously presented): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 1, wherein water is further contained.
14. (previously presented): A cosmetic comprising the agent for skin external use of claim 1.
15. (canceled).
16. (canceled).

17. (previously presented): A stabilizer for an agent for skin external use containing a salt of higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester, said higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester being represented by the following formula (1):



Formula (1)

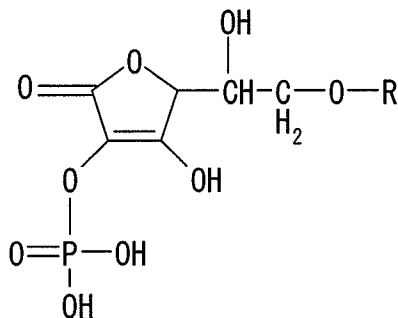
wherein R is a group of an aliphatic carboxylic acid having 10 to 20 carbon atoms, said stabilizer comprising 1,2-pentanediol or 1,2-hexanediol or both.

18. (canceled).

19. (new): An agent for skin external use, comprising:

a salt of higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester, said higher fatty acid ester of ascorbic acid-2-phosphoric acid ester being represented by the following formula

(1):



Formula (1)

wherein R is a residual group of an aliphatic carboxylic acid having 10 to 20 carbon atoms, and 1,2-hexanediol contained in an amount of not less than 0.05% by mass and less than 12% by mass.

20. (new): The agent for skin external use as claimed in claim 19, wherein R is a residual group of an aliphatic carboxylic acid selected from the group consisting of palmitic acid, 2-hexyldecanoic acid, stearic acid and isostearic acid.